

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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Nationalism

1. The basis of Latvian nationalism is historic. Latvia survived centuries of foreign domination, to emerge with full strength when she regained her independence. It is confidently expected that she will survive again, although Communist rule employs more insidious methods to-day, which render the adherence to national ideals and the upholding of the spirit of nationalism increasingly difficult. The nationalist spirit can now only be fostered gradually, and it is possible to uphold it only by personal contact between individuals and by personal effort and endeavor.
2. Most Latvians value patriotism and love of country above personal gain. The following example of one girl student is quoted as typical. She completed her studies and was offered a post in a remote part of the USSR (in one of the Central Asian Republics), at a much higher salary than such a post would command in Latvia, but she declined to accept it because it meant not only going away, but staying away indefinitely. Officially, the assignment was supposed to be for a couple of years. In practice, however, it is known that, if a person is sent anywhere to fill a position, he cannot leave without providing a substitute to take his place. Generally speaking, this rule applies to every form of employment, and an individual cannot leave a job merely by handing in a resignation. A substitute must be found, and official permission to resign must be obtained. In the case of a post in some remote area, this naturally presents great difficulty. If the job there is done well, permission will not easily be granted; and, if the job is done badly, disciplinary action will ensue, but not repatriation. There are, for example, Latvian engineers who have accepted jobs on some of the big construction projects on the Volga River. Their letters express little, if any, hope of ever returning to Latvia.
3. With each year that passes, more and more people are lost in this manner to the national cause. This is the reason most Latvians do all they can to avoid leaving the country, preferring to remain in their homeland. This is true with the exception, of course, of the careerists, but they cannot be counted as true Latvians.

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4. Every Latvian must pay lip-service, at least, to the Communist regime. Even among the Komsomols, there are many who are by no means truly pro-Communist. The young Latvian who is imbued with national feeling by birth and tradition shouts the Communist slogans with the rest, because otherwise he cannot advance in his studies or his profession, but when patriot meets patriot, words are not necessary; they recognize each other from the tone of their voices and from the look in their eyes. Such signs and inflections are quite imperceptible to anyone but another Latvian. It is for this reason that personal contact now plays so large a part in the maintenance of national spirit.

The Agricultural Population

5. The farmers are the element which forms the core and basic strength of nationalism in Latvia. Broadly speaking, the question of national independence is not so vital a matter to the industrial worker, whose primary interest lies in his pay envelope, as it is to the farmer, to whom it means freedom; because, for the farmer, freedom means life. Consequently, it is vital for Latvians that liberation should not long be delayed, and the hope of the Latvian resistance is for speed.
6. The farmers of Latvia desire liberation even though they know that it can come only through war, and everyone knows that war means loss of life and destruction of property; war is accepted as the price that must be paid for freedom. In general, farmers are not greatly concerned about political matters; what they are concerned about is to be free to live their lives and to work in their own way. The basic desire is to be one's own boss and not to work under the direction of other taskmasters as they now must do in the collective farms.
7. It is recognized in the resistance organization that the kolkhoz system will have to be retained for a while when the country is liberated, but it is planned that all the land shall be taken over by the State and gradually returned to private ownership. There will be terms under which former owners will get back their former holdings by establishing their claims to them although cases will occur where the former owners no longer exist. Since the land will all belong to the State, other persons will be able to acquire such holdings in due course. It will take a couple of years, or longer, to arrange all this, and the plans have been considered in detail by the resistance organization.
8. The economic problems involved in such a reorganization of agriculture have also been given careful consideration. The danger from atomic bombs is not feared in Latvia because there are no big military objectives in the country, no large military bases, and no major industry engaged in war production for the Soviets. Envisaging war, it has been taken into consideration that it may be necessary to forsake the towns temporarily and to avoid the vicinity of railroad junctions and similar points that may be affected during hostilities.
9. The percentage of Latvian farmers in favor of liberation is estimated to be over 90 percent. This can be said to apply also to all other Latvians who own, or owned, any kind of property, because everyone who has even a little plot of land is opposed to the Soviet regime and the restrictions it imposes. There are now some Communists who have bought houses or plots of land since the occupation, but they form only a small minority.

The Intelligentsia

10. Among the Latvian intelligentsia, there are some who have become members of the Party for the sake of making a career, but they are in the minority. As the years go by, however, the percentage won over by Communist propaganda increases, particularly among the younger generation. For the purpose of estimating the percentage of opposition to the Soviet regime among the intelligentsia of Latvia, they must be divided as follows:
 - a. The old intelligentsia, surviving from independence times, of whom approximately 95 percent are anti-Communist.

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- b. The new intelligentsia, educated since the occupation, of whom it is more difficult to form an estimate, but who are at present believed to be 60 to 70 percent anti-Communist.
11. The above estimates refer only to Latvians proper, in whom national feelings are inborn and supported by family background and tradition. Of Latvian Russians, i.e., Latvians who have returned to Latvia from other parts of the USSR, or of Russians living in Latvia, there may be 10 percent who are opposed to the regime.

Desire for Independence

12. The chief reason for the Latvian desire for national independence is the fundamental, inherent feeling of resentment against Russian domination. Among younger Latvians, the Russians are disliked simply because they are Russians and because they are in Latvia. Among older Latvians, the return to national independence is desired because it also means freedom, individual enterprise, and private ownership. If free elections were to be held in Latvia, provided that only real Latvians were to vote, there is no doubt that the Communists would be defeated. If, however, elections were to be held under present conditions when there are in Latvia so many russified Latvians, native Russians, members of the Red Army and their families, and people from other parts of the Soviet Union, all of whom are able to vote from the age of 18 under the Soviet regime, then a very different result would be obtained. It is exceedingly difficult to estimate with any degree of confidence the number of Russians who have come to Latvia since the occupation, since no authentic or reliable population figures are available and the number of Russians employed in Latvian industry varies greatly from factory to factory.

Titoism

13. It is believed that the idea of adopting some form of Titoism in Latvia might find support among the new intelligentsia; but, since Latvia is lacking in material resources, such a form of government would scarcely be feasible.

Morale and Propaganda

14. The members of the active resistance keep in touch with the farmers and with their supporters who live legally, keeping up morale and demonstrating their own spirit of determination. It is too dangerous now for any kind of bulletins or news sheets to be issued although this means of propaganda and keeping up morale has been given much thought by the resistance organization. It was tried in the past, but always failed because, in the distribution of leaflets or bulletins, even when this was done from hand to hand, there was always some weak link that gave way, eventually leading back to the authors and printers and to their liquidation. The vigilance of the MGB is too great now. Hence, other means are needed to encourage and keep alive the spirit and the strength of nationalism in Latvia. Among Latvian patriots, the need for Western propaganda is felt to be urgent. Many people in Latvia have radios, and there is a large potential listening audience.

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